

WHOLE HEALTH NEWSLETTER

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System

Summer 2021 Vol. 2, edition 4

Live Whole Health

The Cure for It All

by Julia Fehrenbacher

Go gently today, don't hurry
or think about the next thing. Walk
with the quiet trees, can you believe
how brave they are—how kind? Model
your life
after theirs. Blow kisses
at yourself in the mirror
especially when
you think you've messed up. Forgive
yourself for not meeting your
unreasonable
expectations. You are human, not
God—don't be so arrogant.

Praise fresh air
clean water, good dogs. Spin
something from joy. Open
a window, even if
it's cold outside. Sit. Close
your eyes. Breathe. Allow

the river
of it all to pulse
through eyelashes
fingertips, bare toes. Breathe in
breathe out. Breathe until

you feel
your bigness, until the sun
rises in your veins. Breathe
until you stop needing
anything
to be different.



Message from the Whole Health Program Manager, Laurie Reisman, LCSW.

*"Almost everything will work again if you
unplug it for a few minutes, including you."
Anne Lamott*

In Whole Health we often spend a lot of time talking about taking care of yourself first and putting yourself at the center. If you look at the circle of health, it says "me" at the center. What does that mean? People that are reading this newsletter are people that have put their lives on the line to serve our country and are some of the most selfless people that I've personally ever met. So, why now, are we asking you to shift that perspective to focusing on you? What does it mean to focus on yourself at the center and be in service at the same time? This is a question that I have been contemplating on for quite a while. It has not been easy, however, the journey has been so worthwhile. As someone who enjoys serving others, I have found this concept of self-care and putting myself in the center a difficult one to figure out. I used to only engage in self-care when I was exhausted and couldn't physically or mentally do any more. That is a start, because many people don't even get to that far, however, I don't think that is truly what "me" at the center, or self-care is. I have learned

that in order to serve, I have to have something to serve. To follow the cliché, "I cannot pour from an empty cup." If and when I do serve from that place of an empty cup in a sense, trying to fill my cup by serving, I inevitably become tired, burnt out, irritable and resentful. This is where the self-care formula comes in! When I'm giving from a full or overflowing cup, guess what? Service feels effortless and joyful. It feels energizing rather than depleting. What I have learned is that self-care needs to be a way of life. It is a commitment that we each have to make to ourselves in order to live our best possible life. It consists of dedication and loyalty to ourselves, so that we can run on a charged battery, full of life force. It looks different for every single person, which is why I referred to it as a formula. Some of the ways that self-care looks for me are: daily Yoga or Tai Chi, a walk in nature, a warm bath, saying no when need to, saying yes when I need to, delegating tasks, stating clear boundaries, clear communication,

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not engaging in gossip, drinking water, taking a deep breath, daily prayer and meditation, planning my day and creating a schedule etc. Lately I have been focusing on taking my practices to my life, to see everything that I do as sacred and of service, so that I can see self-care as a sacred act that gets woven into my daily existence. In this mindset, I incorporate this concept into every task on my job or in my home, no matter how mundane or important it seems. It is stopping to ask myself what I need if I feel stressed or tense and re-connecting to my personal mission, aspiration and purpose. There are a billion different pathways and a billion different ways that self-care will look depending on what matters to you. We at the VA are so interested in connecting with you and listening to what matters to you and assisting you to get connected in this way, so that you can be of service to the world in the way that is uniquely yours! Whole Health Coach-

es are available through any Patient Aligned Care Team or Community Based Outpatient Care Clinic to help you find your unique pathway and formula to putting yourself in the center.

[Whole Health - North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/)

Moving your body to reach your Whole Health goals has never been easier with the [MOVE! Coach app](#), a holistic weight management app for Veterans, service members, their families, and others. Through 16 self-management modules, participants can manage their weight, diet, and exercise goals through in-app activities, worksheets, trackers and educational resources. Participants can monitor progress and receive feedback on their weight loss journey.

"Movement is a medicine for creating change in a person's physical, emotional and mental states."

—Carol Welch



MOVING the BODY

Moving the body can help prevent and treat dozens of diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Why is Moving the Body Important?

Working the body is any activity that uses your energy to move the large muscles in your body. Some activities increase your stamina, while others improve your strength, flexibility, or balance. Moving your body in these ways can improve your ability to do more of the things you want.

What if there was one treatment that could prevent and treat dozens of diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity?

And what if there were very few side effects of that treatment? Would you do it?

There is such a treatment available! And you can do it yourself, at whatever time works for you, in a way that is enjoyable for you. That treatment is physical activity - moving the body.

How may moving the body improve my health?

Research studies have found that physical activity does the following:

- Reduces fatigue and helps one sleep better
- Improves mental health and decreases anxiety and depression
- Promotes the growth of brain cells and



- improves the way the brain works
- Helps prevent many long-term health issues such as: Heart disease, Cancer, Type 2 diabetes, High blood pressure, Obesity, and Dementia
- Slows the aging process
- Lowers the chance of dying early from any cause
- and Increases the length of time one may live

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Moving the body can also help in other specific ways. Some activities increase your stamina. Others improve your strength, or flexibility, or balance. Still others may improve your range of motion (the area a joint can move), or dexterity (ability to use your hands or body). Moving your body in these ways can help you to live your life to the fullest and, within reason, be able to do the things you want to do. What can I do if I don't like to exercise? Exercise is just one form of moving the body. It involves a

plan and repetition. These might be things you do at the gym or while working out at home. But moving the body includes more than exercise. It is any activity that uses your energy to move the large muscles in your body. Examples are biking, walking, swimming, gardening, yardwork, playing a sport, and actively playing with a child or animal. The list is endless.

For this information and more go to [Moving the Body - Whole Health \(va.gov\)](http://Moving the Body - Whole Health (va.gov))

Summer Heat: How Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Can Help!

by Heather Stiles, retired US Navy Chief

This article suggests an ancient healthcare practice. This healthcare practice, called Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM), has provided a stage for patient centered care in my own treatment journey. I have found that Acupuncture and its various modalities are outstanding at treating chronic pain related to time I have spent in Military Service. Through these treatment experiences, I have learned how AOM treats far more than just chronic pain and leads to overall wellness practices that are practical and applicable to all Veterans.

Another good friend of mine has the following to say about Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine:

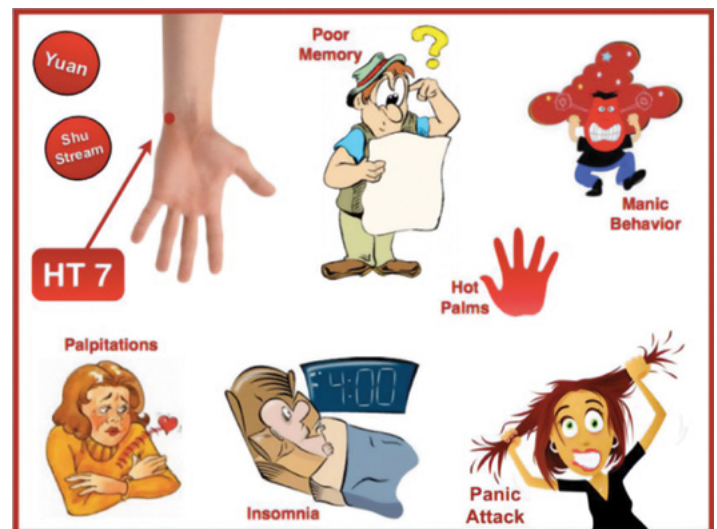
“My first experience with acupuncture and oriental medicine came after a friend referred me as a way of treating my chronic low back pain. The pain was the result of multiple injuries suffered during my career as an Army chaplain. I went to Dragon Rises College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in Gainesville, Florida to try Acupuncture out. Over the course of several weeks, I noticed that my pain level had abated, and I had increased freedom of movement in my lower back. An interesting side effect of the treatment was that my symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly the nightmares, were less frequent and severe. Over the past several years, acupuncture has become an essential part of my health care regimen that helps keep my back pain at an acceptable level as well as addressing other health concerns.”

George Holston, Chaplain (LTC), U. S. Army (Ret.)

Please take a moment with the information provided below to see how AOM concepts such as acupressure, qigong, and food therapy can be applied at home to promote overall health and wellness.

The focus of this article will be summer related, but AOM helps to treat and moderate conditions throughout all the seasons. AOM acknowledges not four, but five seasons. The fifth season is called late summer. This season occurs in late August through mid-September. This Michigander knows very well North Florida and South Georgia has some

of the hottest summers there are! AOM notes that seasonally related conditions many people may experience in summer and late summer are dislike for hot weather, high blood



pressure, red face, restlessness, blood circulation issues, mental confusion, insomnia, dark urine, and mania.

Accupressure point for Emotional Stressors related to Summer Heat:

Acupressure can be a subtle way to remind the body of the proper flow of energy required to help resolve stagnation of emotional and physical forms. See below a very common point used to treat many heart/fire/summer-related imbalances found at [https://acuproacademy.com/all-](https://acuproacademy.com/all-about-the-tcm-heart/)



[about-the-tcm-heart/](https://acuproacademy.com/all-about-the-tcm-heart/). This website is one of my favorite resources to show the everyday American how acupuncture and acupressure can work for them in a simple pictographic.

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(Summer Heat Relief, continued from page 3)

Acupressure point for physical heat conditions:

Large Intestine 11 is a powerhouse point with two primary functions: Clears heat such as moderates a sunburn, helps reduce a heat related high blood pressure moment, quells hot flashes, and helps with heat related sleep difficulties. LI 11 is a great vent for the body to release a little steam whenever it's needed. The next time you're feeling a bit too warm, let Large Intestine 11 be one of the points to help you out. See more information about this topic at <http://synergyacupunctureandwellness.com/blog-feed/2017/6/what-does-that-point-do-large-intestine-11>

Qigong: a Physical Movement and Breathing Technique

In the brief and effective you tube video below, there is an outstanding example of how to use qigong/physical movement

and Breathing techniques to balance and stretch the heart meridian which is directly related to summer heat type imbalances.

Try it out and see how you feel! Please make sure you are in a place that is cool, you are well hydrated, and you're able to maintain your balance. If you feel balance may be an issue for you, this exercise can easily be done from the seated position as well.

<https://youtu.be/pFpPEVISUOw>

Nutritional Therapy for Summer Heat

Finally, we are the Captains of our own Nutrition! Please use this excellent tool to your advantage by feeding yourself the fuel you need to be successful in the summer months. Specific foods have been used for more than three thousand years to counteract the effects of summer heat. Some of these foods are **watermelon, cucumber, and mint**. Try a slightly cool but not frozen water beverage with all three infused for a tasty and refreshing summer treat! See the yummy image for inspiration, as well as this link for more information on the topic: <https://acupuncturecenterinc.com/health-well-news/tcm-for-summer-heat/>.

Thank you for taking a moment to learn with me and always working to take the best possible care of yourselves.
Navy Chief Navy Pride!



VA Chaplains

are available to you for spiritual and pastoral support. Our desire is to care for our Veterans, their families and our staff members alike. We are here to listen and encourage, offer comfort and hope, provide prayer and emotional support, and promote a sense of peace. In the Gainesville and Lake City VA Medical Centers, you have 24/7 access to our Chapels for prayer, meditation or to simply sit in a quiet place. Our offices are located nearby if you would like to talk. Please feel free to call us or drop-in at your convenience. We are also available to our OPC's and CBOC's by phone or virtually and at Jacksonville OPC in-person. We want you to know that we are here for you!

Gainesville VAMC

Main Building (1st Floor, B232-1)
7:30am - 4:00pm, daily
(352) 548-7427

Lake City VAMC

Main Building (1st Floor, B110)
7:00am - 3:30pm, daily
(386) 755-3016 ext. 392125

Jacksonville OPC

Jefferson St. Building (1st Floor, 1P105)
8:00am - 4:00pm, M-F
(904) 475-6381

summer spice: **VANILLA**

by Patricia Granberry

LPN Whole Health Coach - Gainesville

Vanilla is the only edible fruit of the orchid family, the largest family of flowering plants in the world. There are over 150 varieties of vanilla plants.

The flower that produces the vanilla bean lasts only one day. The beans are hand-picked and then cured, wrapped, and dried in a process that takes 4 to 6 months.

Only the Melipona bee, found in Central America, can pollinate vanilla. In other parts of the world, humans duplicate the process using a wooden needle.

After saffron, vanilla is the most expensive spice in the world. Despite the expense, vanilla is highly valued for its flavor and is

regarded as the world's most popular aroma and flavor, vanilla is a widely used aroma and flavor compound for foods, beverages as indicated by its popularity as an ice cream flavor.

We can use vanilla to make food taste sweeter without adding sugar since we have a flavor associate between vanilla and things tasting sweet.



*People should never use vanilla in any form as a replacement for medical treatment. People should always speak with their doctors before making any changes. Remember that good nutrition is not about focusing on any one food or nutrient above all others. It is about balance: consuming a variety of foods and getting a balance of all kinds of different nutrients.

[Vanilla: 8 Fun Facts - WebMD](#)

www.webmd.com



JUST AS THE WATER
REFLECTS THE STARS AND
THE MOON, THE BODY
REFLECTS THE MIND AND
SOUL.

- RUMI

Banana Oatmeal Pancakes



Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 5 minutes | Total: 10 minutes
Yield: 1 servings | Serving Size: ~3 pancakes

Ingredients

1 banana
2 eggs
1/3 cup rolled oats, ground
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
Cooking oil spray

Directions

Place peeled banana in a bowl and mash up with a fork.

Add eggs and mix well.

Put the oats in a blender, food processor or coffee grinder and blend until it becomes a fine powder like “flour”.

Add oats, cinnamon and vanilla to banana mixture and stir to combine.

Heat a skillet over medium heat. Spray with cooking oil, and add the batter to the hot pan about 1/4 at a time. This should yield about 3 pancakes.

Cook until golden brown on the one side, about 2 minutes, then gently flip over. Cook on the other side until golden as well, about 1-2 more minutes.

Repeat with remaining batter.

Recipe notes

Store leftovers in the refrigerator for up to 7 days and the freezer for up to 3 months.

Nutrition facts per serving:

Calories: 462 | Total Fat: 26 g | Saturated Fat: 5.5 g

Sodium: 143 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 46 g | Dietary Fiber: 6 g | Protein: 18 g

Submitted by Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N, Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian

For more recipes, please visit www.nutrition.va.gov

**“Don’t worry about your body.
It isn’t as small as it once was,
But honestly, the world needs
more of you.**

**You look in the mirror
Like you’ve done something
wrong,**

**But you look perfect.
Anyone who says otherwise is
telling a lie**

**To make you feel weak.
And you know better.**

**You’ve survived every single day,
For as long as you’ve been alive.
You could spit fire if you
wanted.”**

Clementine von Radics

“Words of Wisdom”

**If you must look back, do
so forgivingly.
If you must look forward,
do so prayerfully.
However, the wisest thing
you can do is
be present in the
present — gratefully.**

Maya Angelou



Peer Support message

When I think about the value of all the components of health and the role they play in my everyday life, moving the body is definitely one that is important to me. When I was told exercise and stretching would help me feel better physically, I did not believe it would help. Often it seemed like too much work or a chore and it hurt to exercise. I only became willing after I tried every quick remedy for pain that I could think of. Finally, I had enough of the discomfort and gave movement a try. I started by getting stretch exercises from the physical therapy department. Then I started riding my bike in beautiful places near the water or woods while listening to my favorite music. Not only did my pain improve but I found that I became more flexible, had more energy and was sleeping better at night. Moving my body encouraged me to make better food choices and to eat smaller amounts of food because I did not want to do this work only to undo it by eating too much of the wrong things. I also discovered if I exercised by doing the things that I enjoyed instead of trying to go to the gym, I was able to keep doing it. I would often purchase memberships for the gym only to go

once or twice and never return. Having something I enjoyed such as walking, biking, hiking, dancing, and swimming helped me to continue my efforts. None of these I could do very long when I started, but now I get to enjoy them regularly because I started. If you are like me, don’t wait until you are at the last resort. Start exercising now and make it fun. If you need support to help with your goals, feel free to reach out to me or one of our whole health coaches in your primary care. We can help support you and your goals and get you moving.



Wendy Skinner
*Peer Support, at the
Gainesville Primary Care clinic*

The CIH modality for this quarter is

MASSAGE

by Debby Lefler, LPN Whole Health Coach

Massage, what a lovely, peaceful, happy thought. We know massages feel good, but did you know that the VA offers coverage for massages through community care if your Physician approves it as being clinically necessary? Currently massage is being used in the VA system primarily for pain. According to the Integrative Health Coordinating Center, VHA Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation, "Clinical massage therapy is the manipulation of the soft tissues of the human body for therapeutic purposes. Based in ancient traditions, massage therapy is a professional health care discipline in the United States."

We used to think massage was an expensive way to pamper ourselves but massage can be a powerful tool to help us take charge of our health and well-being, whether you have a specific health condition or are just looking for another stress reliever. There are a number of health benefits related to massage such as; reducing stress and increasing relaxation, reducing pain and muscle soreness and tension, improving circulation, energy and alertness, lowering heart rate and blood pressure, improving immune function just to name a few. Many studies have been done that show the benefits of massage therapy.

Types of massage include: Swedish, deep tissue, sports, trigger point, Shiatsu, Chinese traditional massage, hot stone, aromatherapy, reflexology, couples, prenatal, just to name a few. Length of massages can be from 10-90 minutes. Most



massage therapists will ask you about symptoms and medical problems prior to starting. Many play music to help you relax during the massage. Massages can be given in a sitting or laying position and can be done fully clothed if preferred. When done by an experienced, trained massage therapist and used appropriately, it is considered to have very few risks.

Many health clubs, chiropractors offices, wellness clinics, hospitals, clinics, etc offer massage therapy. You might want to ask about the massage therapists license, experience, certifications, training, cost, type of massage, etc prior to making an appointment. The VA only refers to therapists who are trained and licensed. Some insurances cover the cost with or without a copay. Always check with your insurance company before having a massage to avoid an unexpected surprise. If you have a spouse or friend who is also interested in massages and want to avoid the cost, there are educational programs that will train you to massage each other.

Information obtained from: [MayoClinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org) and Integrative Health Coordinating CenterVHA Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others."
—Maya Angelou



Move and Groove to Soothe!

Dr. Robin O'Hearn, PHD

You've heard about all the great things that exercise does for you, right? It can help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight, strengthen your muscles, reduce your cholesterol, and help you to sleep better. Did you know that exercise also has amazing mental health benefits? Movement can aid in alleviating depression and anxiety, as well as boost memory and attention. And, while it may seem counterintuitive, exercise is one of the most important tools in your Whole Health toolbox if you live with chronic physical pain. What happens when we move? We breathe more deeply, delivering oxygen and nutrients to our tissues. Over time, lung capacity increases and you may breathe more easily. Movement also raises our heart rate so that the oxygen can be delivered to blood vessels and other tissues. As you begin to create a habit of regular exercise, your heart becomes more efficient and you find that the same intensity and duration of exercise becomes easier. Eventually this results in a lower resting heart rate, generally considered a marker of fitness. Consistency also pays off by way of stimulating growth of blood vessels, resulting in lower blood pressure.

While many fit people love a long run or a challenging bike ride, you don't have to complete a high-intensity workout to reap some amazing benefits. Something as gentle as a 10-minute walk is shown to boost memory and focus. Keep up that easy walking habit and you will actually begin to grow your

hippocampus – a tiny but mighty brain region that tends to shrink as we age, resulting in memory loss. Even older people with cognitive impairment who begin a walking program can improve memory function. This improvement may be due to exercise boosting production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF stimulates nerve growth, and a growing body of research is showing that regular exercise can have pain-reducing effects for people with a variety of pain conditions including neuropathy (nerve pain), fibromyalgia, and other chronic conditions.

For even greater mood-boosting and anxiety reduction, consider exercising with others. A 2014 study by psychologist Joanne Lumsden and colleagues found that when people synchronized their movements with others (for example, performing the same series of upper-body exercises) they reported more of an improvement in mood than those who engaged in solo exercise. Add your favorite salsa/reggae/gospel/rock or country music and exercise becomes dance! Got two left feet? Consider an exercise class in something with a meditative component (like tai chi or yoga) and you will enjoy all of the benefits outlined here together! The North Florida/South Georgia VA system has many options for you to try out. Talk to your Whole Health team to find out how you can get started.

National Whole Health Resources

The Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips, and treats Veterans so they can take charge of their health and well-being and live their lives to the fullest. Whole Health starts with a simple question: What matters to you?

Download the [Live Whole Health app](#) to manage your Whole Health journey anytime, anyplace.

The [Whole Health website](#) is a great place to start your Whole Health journey.

Check out the [#LiveWholeHealth blog series](#)

The Pathway to Whole Health: <https://youtu.be/0nkO-3PA29c>

Adopting Whole Health: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/docs/VA-OPCC-AdoptingWholeHealth-PhotoEssay-508.pdf> *Copy and paste into web browser

North Florida/South Georgia Whole Health Website:

[Whole Health - North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System \(va.gov\)](#)

Resources for Homeless Veterans

- Information on [homelessness programs](#) and initiatives through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- [The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#) has a helpline available to support Veterans needing homelessness resources and support.

Contact at **1-800-VET-HELP** or **1-800-838-4357**.

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Aid Line.

Contact at **1-877-4AI-DVET** or **1-877-424-3838**.

Contributors to the Veterans Newsletter:

Laurie Reisman, LCSW Whole Health Program Manager, NF/SG: Program Manager Message, The Cure for It All by Julia Fehrenbacher, Dr. MLK, Anne Lamott, Maya Angelou & Rumi Quotes

Patricia Granberry, LPN Whole Health Coach Gainesville, Spice, Words of Wisdom from Maya Angelou

Wendy Skinner, Certified Peer Support Specialist, PCMH Gainesville; Peer Support Message, Moving Your body from the Circle of Health, Carol Welch quote.

Debby D. Lefler, LPN Whole Health Coach The Villages CIH Modality; Massage

Melanya Souza, Registered Dietitian, NF/SGVHS Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian and VA National Healthy Teaching Kitchen Co-Lead, Gainesville VA Medical Center: Banana Oatmeal Pancake Recipe, Vanilla Herb section nutrition statement.

Chaplain Melvin Lane, Chaplain Message

Robin O'Hearn, PHD, Healthy Living Team, Jacksonville; Move and Groove To Soothe

Jackie Morgan, LPN Whole Health Coach Gainesville; Veteran Success Story

Heather Stiles, US Navy Chief Retired; Summer Heat: How Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Can Help!